

STUDY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

1 April 1917

[Text] The national strength is weak; the martial arts are not flourishing. The physical quality of the nation becomes ever more debilitated. This is a distressing situation. As those advocating physical education do not reach the source, their effort has produced no result over a long period of time. Not only has there been no improvement, but the weakness worsens. Hitting the mark and reaching far are external matters, the results. Fullness in physical strength is internal, the cause. When the body is not firm, one is afraid of arms. How can one hit the mark? And how can one reach far? Firmness comes from tempering; tempering comes from awareness. It isn't that today's physical education advocates do not think of all kinds of means, yet they produce no result. It is because the external force cannot stimulate the mind. They do not know the true meaning of physical education. When it comes to the value of physical education, its effect, or where to start, they are in a fog. No wonder they produce no result. To make physical education effective, we must promote subjective awareness. Once there is awareness, the particulars of physical education will become clear without need of explanation, and the effect of hitting the mark and reaching far will appear without seeking. I deeply feel the importance of physical education, but regret the improper approach of the advocates. I know that there are many who feel like I do. Setting aside my diffidence, I would like to present my views for discussion. What I say is not all practical, and maybe much is mere empty words and ideals. I do not wish to deceive you. Should you favor me with your thoughts and instructions, I shall be humbly grateful.

I. Explanation of Physical Education

Ever since the beginning of mankind, be they wise or obtuse, there has been no one who does not protect his own life. Therefore, the ferns of the western hills were eaten when hungry; the plums on top of the well were swallowed. Using timber for shelter and pelts for clothes--it was instinctive, without knowing the reasons. But it was not refined. The sages appeared. Then, there were rites, and there was order in daily living. In his private life, Confucius was serene and at peace. He ate no spoilt

meat. When he went shooting in the garden, spectators lined up like a wall. The structure of the human body is no different from the animals, and yet the animals do not live as long as man. It is because the animals do not have order in their lives. Man regulates his life, becoming ever more so with time. Therefore, there is physical education. Physical education is the way to foster life. Different people follow different ways. Chuang-tzu learned from the cook; Confucius pursued archery and charioteering. In today's civilized nations, Germany is the most advanced. The popularity of fencing spreads in the entire country. Japan has its samurai and recently, influenced by China, judo. They are most impressive. However, when we study their contents, they are all based on physiology, the structure of the human body, the movement of the vessels and energy, the parts which develop the earliest, and the parts which are deficient. Their physical education follows such order, checking the excessive and remedying the deficient. In conclusion, it is for the balanced development of the body. Therefore, physical education is the way of mankind to foster life, enabling the body to develop in a balanced manner and according to order.

II. The Position of Physical Education

Physical education supplements ethical and academic education. Yet, virtue and wisdom both rely on the body. Without the body, there can be neither virtue nor wisdom. But there are few who are aware of it. Some stress wisdom; others say virtue is the most important. Knowledge is truly valuable. That is where man is different from animals. Yet what is the vessel of knowledge? Virtue is truly valuable. It is order and equity among men. Yet what is the lodge of virtue? The body is the vessel of knowledge and the lodge of virtue. Like a cart, it carries knowledge; like a house, it shelters virtue. The body is the cart to carry knowledge and the house to shelter virtue. Children, upon reaching the proper age, enter elementary school. During elementary school, the development of the body should be specially stressed, while the improvement of knowledge and the building of virtue are secondary. Fostering and caring are major matters, while teaching and training are supplementary. Today, many people are ignorant of this principle. Therefore, there have been children who became sick or died as a result of studying. In middle school and above, the three kinds of education should be equally stressed. Today, most people incline to stress the academic. In middle school years, the body is not fully developed, yet today there are less people who build it and more who destroy it. Will it not suspend development? Under the education system of China today, the subjects are so numerous that even adults with a strong body cannot handle them, let alone the young and the weak. It seems that the educators purposely set up such a tedious and heavy curriculum to harass the students in order to trample their body and sabotage their life. Those refusing to accept it are punished; those with superior ability are assigned additional books, induced by sweet words and tempted by large rewards. Alas, the students seem to hate their own life and wish to destroy and sacrifice it! How muddled can they be? Man's only worry is not to have a body; there is no other worry. Once the body is sound, everything else follows. There

is nothing better than physical education to improve the body. Physical education should be of primary importance. Once the body is strong, one can advance vigorously and effectively in the academic and the ethical aspects. Physical education should be considered an important part of our study. There must be the primary and the secondary, and the beginning and the end. Such is the way.

III. The Defects of Physical Education in the Past and What Should Be Done

The three kinds of education should be equally stressed. Yet scholars of the old days stressed the moral and the academic while ignoring the physical. The results were slight body and bowed head, and fragile white hands; short of breath when climbing a mountain and cramped legs when crossing a water. Yen-tzu and Chia-sheng were short-lived; Wang Po and Lu Chao-ling either died young or became crippled. They were all superior in virtue and wisdom. Yet one day when the body no longer existed, their virtue and wisdom perished also. That the North was powerful was because there were many able-bodied men. The patriots and warriors mostly came from Liang-chou. In the beginning of the Ch'ing Dynasty, Yen Hsi-chai and Li Kang-chu were scholars and warriors simultaneously. Yen Hsi-chai travelled 1,000 li to learn the skill of fencing and beat the warriors in a match. Therefore he said that one must master both knowledge and martial arts. Ku Yen-nan was a Southerner, but he preferred to live in the North and liked horses more than boats. These ancients are worthy of our emulation.

With the establishment of schools, the ways of other nations have been adopted, and there has been some change in the customs. Yet the educators, as a result of what they learned before, cannot free themselves from the old ways. They seek external display only, ignoring the fundamental while pursuing the details. Therefore, I feel that today's physical education has the form but not the substance. There exist the physical education course and the physical education teacher, but few benefits and there is more harm than good. The teacher gives the orders, and the students force themselves to obey. The body follows but the mind refuses, and there is immeasurable mental agony. Mental agony brings physical agony. At the end of a physical education session, everyone is exhausted in body and spirit. When the food and drink are not clean, inorganic matter and germs enter the body and cause disease. Improper lighting damages the eyesight. Improper heights of the tables and chairs damage the body. Such instances are too many to be enumerated.

Then what should our students do? The school equipment and the teachers' teaching are external objective matters, while we still have our internal subjective matters. The mind determines all, and the body follows the order of the mind. The good or the bad all depends on ourselves. We get what we want. This applies to physical education. If we do not arouse ourselves, even if the external objective matters are perfect, we will not benefit from them. Therefore, we must begin with our own initiative in physical education.

IV. The Effect of Physical Education

As man is an animal, he acts. As he is a rational animal, he always acts with a reason. Why is man's action valuable? Why is man's rational action valuable? In a narrow sense, action is to make a living. In a broad sense, it is to defend the nation. Neither constitutes the principal significance. Action is to foster our life and please our mind. Chu-tzu advocated respect; Lu-tzu urged tranquillity. Tranquillity is inaction. Neither is respect; it is also inaction. Lao-tzu said that inaction was great; Shih-shih sought quietude. Mediation was followed by the disciples of Chu and Lu. Recently someone by the name of Yin-shih-tzu promoted mediation, bragging about its ingenuity and scorning action for being self-destructive. That may be one way, but I cannot subscribe to it. According to my opinion, action is the only thing in the world.

The action of man, when regulated, is physical education. As stated before, the effect of physical education is the strengthening of tendons and bones. I once heard that man's structure and blood vessels were determined at a given age and could not be changed. Usually after age 25 there was no further change. Now I know it is not so. Man's body changes every day. Metabolism goes on continuously in the tissues. Eyesight and hearing can be improved. Even those 60 or 70 years old can change their physical structure. I also heard that it was difficult for the weak to become strong. Now I have also found out that it is not so. For those who are born strong, if they abuse themselves, indulging in addictions and relying on their natural strength, they will become weak. As for the weak, as they are aware of the imperfections of their body and fearful of dying young, they are careful with themselves. In the negative aspect, they strictly abstain from addictions, afraid to do damage. In the positive aspect, they diligently temper themselves, remedying their deficiencies, and they become strong after a prolonged effort. Therefore, those who are born strong have no need to congratulate themselves, and those born weak have no need to feel sorry for themselves. I was born weak, but maybe Heaven wants to induce me to become strong. Famous athletes in the West, such as America's Roosevelt, German's (Sun-t'ang), and Japan's Kano, all attained the greatest of strength from the weakest of bodies. I also heard that the mental and the physical could not be both perfect, and that those using their mind were often deficient in body, and vice versa. Such theory is also fallacious. It only applies to those who have no determination; it does not cover everyone. Confucius died at age 72, and one has never heard of him suffering from ill health. Buddha travelled incessantly to spread the doctrines, and he also died at an old age. Jesus unfortunately met with an unjust death. Mohammad, with the Koran in his left hand and a sword in his right, conquered the world. They were all sages of ancient times and the greatest thinkers. Today's Mr Wu Chih-yung is in his 70's, and he thinks he will live to 100. He also is a man using his mind. Wang Hsiang-ch'i died when he was in his 70's. He was healthy and alert up until then. How can all such instances

be explained by the above fallacy? In sum, physical education strengthens the tendons and bones; when the tendons and bones are strengthened, the quality of the body will change. The weak will become strong, and the body and the mind will both become perfect. It is not destiny, but man's effort.

Not just strengthening the tendons and bones, but physical education will also increase knowledge. There is a recent saying: Civilize the spirit; barbarize the body. It is an apt statement. To civilize the spirit, the body must first be barbarized. Once the body is barbarized, civilized spirit follows. Knowledge is to understand the things in the world and render judgment. This requires physical effort. Direct observation depends on the ears and eyes; thinking depends on the brain. The ears and eyes and the brain are parts of the body. Only when the body is sound will knowledge become perfect. Therefore, one can say that knowledge is acquired indirectly through physical education. There are hundreds of fields of study today. Whether to study in school or by oneself, those who can handle the task are strong in body, and those who cannot are weak. The realms of the strong and the weak are different.

Not just increasing knowledge, but physical education will also harmonize the emotions. Emotions are very powerful in man. The ancients controlled them with reason. Thus, it was said that the master was always alert. It was also said that reason controlled the mind. Nevertheless, reason comes from the mind, and the mind exists in the body. The weak are often enslaved by their emotions and cannot extricate themselves. The crippled are often unbalanced in their emotions and cannot be saved by their reason. Only when the body is sound will the emotions be harmonized. It is an immutable principle. Take the following instance: When we encounter an unpleasantness and become excited, our mind is disturbed and we cannot control ourselves, but if we engage in vigorous exercises, we can immediately cleanse ourselves of the old concept and clarify our mind. An instant effect is produced.

Not just harmonizing the emotions, but physical education will strengthen our determination. This is where the major effect of physical education lies. The essential point of physical education is courage, and the goal of courage, such as bravery, fearlessness, intrepidity, and perseverance, belongs to the realm of determination. Take the following instance: Cold water baths will train one to be brave and fearless, as well as intrepid. In any kind of exercise, one must persist steadily, leading toward perseverance. Long-distance running, for example, is most apparent in perseverance. The strength to extract the mountain and the bearing to conquer the world were nothing but bravery. The determination not to return home before killing Lou-lan was nothing but fearlessness. Converting the family into the country was nothing but intrepidity. Passing by the door of his home three times without entering after an absence of 8 years was nothing but perseverance. All these qualities can be attributed to constant physical education. Determination is the harbinger of one's career.

Those slight of limb are flighty in behavior; those slack of muscle are soft and slow in mind. Thus the body influences the mind. Physical education strengthens the tendons and bones, thereby increasing knowledge, thereby harmonizing the emotions, and thereby reinforcing determination. The tendons and bones are our body, while knowledge, emotions, and determination constitute our mind. When the body and the mind are both sound, there is excellence. Therefore, physical education is the only thing to foster our body and please our mind.

V. Reasons for Aversion To Exercise

Exercise is the most important part of physical education. Most of today's scholars dislike exercise. There are four reasons: One is the lack of awareness. For something to materialize in one's action, there must first be an inclination toward it. But even more than inclination, one must first have the intelligence to gain a detailed understanding of it. Understanding is awareness. Most people do not know the relationship between exercise and themselves. Or, they may have a rough idea, but have no detailed knowledge. Therefore, their intelligence is not activated, and their senses not stimulated. That some people can study science diligently is because of its close relationship with themselves. If they do not study it today, they will not have the means to make a living in the future. But when it comes to exercise, they do not have such awareness. This is partly because they do not ponder profoundly, and partly because the teachers do not know how to enlighten them. Another reason is that old habits are difficult to change. In China, we have always stressed the academic. "Good men do not serve as soldiers." Though we know that exercise is proper and that the nations have become strong due to exercise, the force of the old concepts remains strong. Exercise, which is a new concept, is only half accepted. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people do not like exercise. The third reason is the lack of promotion. This point can be further subdivided into two factors. First, the so-called educators today mostly do not understand physical education. Hearing about it but not knowing what it is, they also engage in physical education. Therefore, they have neither the sincerity nor the method. As a result, they only discourage students from studying it. When a profligate talks about independence, or a drunk discusses abstinence, naturally no one will believe them. Second, the physical education teachers are mostly uneducated. Their language is so coarse that the listeners have to cover their ears. They only know one skill, and not necessarily expert at it. Day in and day out, they perform the mechanical movements. Anything in form only, without substance, cannot exist. Such is today's physical education. The fourth reason is that the students think of exercise as something shameful. I personally feel that this is the major reason for disliking exercise. As society prefers a well-dressed man with gentlemanly manners, it makes people feel ashamed to expose their arms and legs and wave them around. Therefore, there are those who know the importance of exercise and wish to exercise, but cannot do so. Others can exercise in a group but not by themselves. Still others will exercise

in private but not in public. In a word, it is due to bashfulness. The foregoing are the four reasons for aversion to exercise. The first and fourth are subjective, and it is up to the individual. The second and third are objective, and it is up to others. A gentleman relies on himself. He must disregard what is up to others.

VI. Fewer Methods of Exercise Preferred

Being weak, I wanted to study the means to improve my health. The ancients discussed the subject extensively. Now the schools have gymnasiums and books. After much studying, I was not benefited. The reason is that practice, rather than words, is important. If one can practice, learning a little bit is enough. Tseng Wen-cheng was greatly benefited by washing his feet before retiring and walking 1,000 steps after a meal. One old man was very healthy even at 80 years of age. When asked, he said: "I do not eat my fill." Today, there are hundreds of exercises. A bird needs only one branch in the forest to build a nest; a field mouse needs only a stomachful out of a river. We have only this one body, only so many bones and vessels. All the 100 methods of exercise are only for the purpose of blood circulation. One method will serve the purpose. Thus, 99 out of the 100 methods can be discarded. The eyes can see clearly if they do not see two things at a time, and the ears can hear clearly if they do not hear two things at a time. To temper the tendons and bones with 100 methods only serve to disturb them, and the desired result may not follow. What is suitable for different purposes is not the same as tempering one's own body. There are the swinging bridge for the sailor, pole carrying for the pole-vaulter, games for the elementary school, and military maneuvering for the middle school and above. They are for different purposes. Exercising the tendons and bones will help blood circulation. It is for tempering one's own body. There should be more methods when there are different purposes, but less for tempering one's own body. Today's scholars often do not realize it, resulting in two defects. Those who like to exercise think the more the better. To do 100 things with one body, one may not benefit at all. In regard to those who do not like to exercise, when they see others possessing so many skills, they feel so inadequate that they may give up altogether. More is not necessarily good, and less not necessarily bad. Even the bending and stretching of one arm or one leg, if done regularly, it will produce a benefit. Only when this is understood will there be improvement in physical education.

VII. Important Points in Exercising

Constancy is required in all undertakings, and this applies to exercise. Of two men exercising, one of them does it sporadically, while the other perseveres diligently. The results will be different. First, constancy in exercising will produce an interest. The static cannot move by itself. There must be something to make it move. To move is due to interest. All sciences produce interests in many aspects, and this applies to exercise also. It is restful to be quiet but tiring to move. Man usually prefers

leisure to effort. If there is nothing to make him move, then his status and preference cannot be changed. Interest comes from daily exercise. It is best to exercise upon rising and before retiring. It is preferable to be naked. Or, wear very thin clothes, because too many clothes are clumsy. Doing it daily will produce the concept of exercise, continuous and uninterrupted. Today's exercise is a continuation of yesterday's and the forerunner of tomorrow's. It does not have to be long. Some 30 minutes will be enough. By so doing, a sort of interest will naturally follow. Secondly, constancy in exercising will bring happiness. After exercising over a long period, the result will become apparent, and one will feel a respect for oneself. One will become efficient in studying and in building one's ethics. One will feel an unlimited happiness. All these come from constancy. Happiness must be distinguished from interest. Interest is the beginning of exercising, and happiness its end. Interest comes from doing while happiness comes from the result. The two are different.

Constancy without attention will not produce results. Like viewing flowers while riding a fast horse, even if one views the flowers every day, it is equivalent to not viewing. Thus, full attention is required when exercising. One must brush aside all idle thoughts and irrelevant worries, and concentrate on the circulation of blood, tensing and relaxing of the muscles, bending of the joints, and breathing. The movements must follow a rhythm, bending and stretching, advancing and retreating, all done conscientiously. According to Chu-tzu, one must concentrate on eating when eating, and on putting on clothes when dressing. The same principle applies to exercising.

A gentleman is civilized and docile, but this does not apply to exercising. One must be barbarous and solid. Only then will one build up one's strength and the tendons and bones. The method of exercising should be solid. Being solid will make it substantial and easy to practice. It is most important, especially for those who are beginners.

The three important points in exercising are constancy, concentration, and being barbarous and solid. There are many other points of attention, but these are the important ones.

VIII. What I Have Gained Through Exercise

I dabbled in all kinds of exercises, but it was all external tempering, without something which could be considered my own. Thus, I extracted the good points of the various exercises and created a new one. I have greatly benefited from it. It consists of six sections: Arms, legs, body, head, hitting, and harmonizing. The sections are further divided into 27 steps. It is called the six-section exercise, which is described below. I hope my readers will correct me.

1. Arm exercise, sitting position

(1) Form fists; stretch and retract in a forward movement, left and right alternating, three times. Left and right alternating means when the left is in motion the right rests, and vice versa.

(2) Form fists; bend elbows; make semi-circular motions by moving forward, sideways, and backward, left and right alternating, three times.

(3) Form fists; stretch and retract in a downward motion, left and right together, three times. Left and right together means both sides moving together, not alternating.

(4) Palms up; stretch forward, left and right alternating, three times.

(5) Palms down; stretch forward, left and right alternating, three times.

(6) Stretch fingers; bend elbows; thrust forward, left and right alternating, three times.

2. Leg exercise, sitting position

(1) Hands form fists hanging downward. Legs remain at original position; bend forward and stretch sideways, left and right alternating, three times.

(2) Hands form fists level in front. Legs stretch sideways; then bend forward. Position may change when stretching; use toes when tending; touch heels with buttocks; left and right alternating, three times.

(3) Hands form fists hanging downward. Legs advance and lift, left and right alternating, three times.

(4) Hands form fists hanging downward. Legs advance and kick forward, left and right alternating, three times.

(5) Hands form fists hanging downward. Legs bend forward and stretch backward. Keep original position when bending but change position when stretching. Both legs roughly on a straight line. Left and right alternating, three times.

(6) Open hands. Body rising and falling; touch heels with buttocks when lowering. Three times.

3. Body exercise, standing position

(1) Body bends forward and backward, three times. Hands form fists; same below.

(2) One arm stretches upward, and the other hangs downward. Expand left and right sides of chest. Left and right once each.

(3) Legs form T shape. Arms swing left and right, twisting the waist. Left and right once each.

4. Head exercise, sitting position

(1) Bend neck backward and forward, three times.

(2) Turn neck left and right, three times.

(3) Massage with hands the forehead, cheeks, nose, lips, throat, ears, and neck.

(4) Free movement: Head remains more or less stationery; exercise skin and lower jaw; five times.

5. Hitting exercise, no set position. Hitting exercise is to hit all parts of the body with fists in order to accelerate blood circulation and firm up the tendons and bones.

(1) Arms: Hit left hand with right, and vice versa.

(a) Upper arm: Top bottom, left, right.

(b) Lower arm: Top, bottom, left, right.

(2) Shoulder.

(3) Chest.

(4) Flanks.

(5) Back.

(6) Stomach.

(7) Buttocks.

(8) Legs, upper and lower.

6. Harmonizing exercise, no set position

(1) Dancing, 10 odd times.

(2) Keep breathing, three times.

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